

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today voted to grant subpoena power to the commission investigating the BP oil spill. The commission, which was established by Executive Order, will investigate the causes of BP's devastating oil spill in the Gulf and report back to the President with recommendations on how to prevent and mitigate the impact of future spills.

The President has committed the full cooperation of the federal government to the commission and its mandate. But since he does not have the authority to give the commission subpoena power through an Executive Order, Congress has to vote to give the commission this essential investigatory tool. The bill passed the House with broad bipartisan support, 420-1.

"The commission must be given subpoena powers to ensure BP cannot hide from this investigation," said Rep. Sanchez. "Congress needs to know what went wrong in the Gulf so we can take action to prevent future tragedies. Nothing could be more important."

Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) has introduced companion legislation in the Senate (S. 3462), but attempts to bring the bill to the floor under unanimous consent have been blocked by Senate Republicans.

"The Senate cannot let politics get in the way of protecting our environment," Rep. Sanchez continued. "Our ultimate goal is to prevent another catastrophic spill, something I think my colleagues in the Senate can agree with. I hope they move quickly to pass Senator Shaheen's legislation."